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LETTER DATED 20 JULY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED
TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith an excerpt from the statement made by His Excellency Mr. Sayf Sa'id bin Sā'id, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers at its twenty-sixth session, held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 28 June to 2 July 1999. The excerpt concerns Iran's occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates, namely the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammad J. SAMHAN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex

Excerpt from the statement made by the Under-Secretary at
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the United Arab
Emirates to the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers
at its twenty-sixth session, held in Ouagadougou from
28 June to 2 July 1999

The promotion of security and stability in the Arabian Gulf region and the endeavour to resolve disputes between States and eliminate the causes of tension by peaceful means are among the priority concerns of my country. The United Arab Emirates has, accordingly, pursued a judicious policy in calling for a peaceful solution to the issue of Iran's occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. It has called upon the Islamic Republic of Iran, a neighbouring Muslim country with which we are linked by relations of neighbourliness, religion and common interest, to respond positively to the repeated calls made by His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States and the Damascus Declaration countries concerning the need for action to resolve the dispute through direct negotiations or by referral to the International Court of Justice. However, Iran's practices on the islands do not attest to good faith but rather have the goal of perpetuating the occupation through the adoption of numerous measures of a military and civil nature that have the purpose of altering their demographic, legal and historical status. Such practices, including the conduct of military exercises on our occupied islands and in our territorial waters, together constitute an act of provocation that brings danger and instability to the region, does nothing to promote relations of good neighbourliness and is incompatible with the principles of tolerance enshrined in our Islamic religion.

We have recently noted that the trends in Iranian policy proclaimed by President Mohammad Khatami are of a positive nature, and my country has welcomed them and it has expressed its readiness to engage with them and encourage them. With the passage of time, however, it appears that these trends exclude the issue of Iran's occupation of the three islands, and this prompts us to doubt the credibility of Iran's declarations. We are nevertheless treating Iran with respect, on the basis of good neighbourliness, our historical and Islamic links and our commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in order to move ahead with our relations and our joint cooperation. My country hopes that this topic will be reflected in the final communiqué of the Conference.
